



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

March 18, 2016

The Honorable Barbara Lee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2267 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Lee:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's recent Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) seeking comment on how to better foster competition in the set-top box marketplace and Section 629 of the Communications Act. Your views are very important and will be considered as part of the Commission's review.

I share your commitment to ensure consumers have choice in the set-top box marketplace. As you point out, Section 629 of the Communications Act is explicit: "The Commission shall... adopt regulations to assure the commercial availability, to consumers of multichannel video programming... of converter boxes, interactive communications equipment, and other equipment... from manufacturers, retailers, and other vendors not affiliated with any multichannel video program distributor [emphasis added]." The issue before the Commission is how to obey Section 629 in a world of evolving technology. The lack of choice that consumers have today for set top boxes would appear to be the opposite of the choice inherent in an "app TV" future and contrary to the statutory mandate.

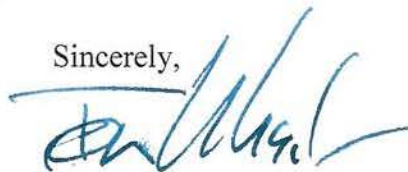
Accordingly, at the February 18<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting, we adopted an NPRM to fulfill the statutory requirement of competitive choice for consumers. Like all NPRMs, this action opens a fact-finding dialog to build a record upon which to base any final decision. And let me be very clear: our NPRM does not revert to the failed "AllVid" proposal from 2010.

The new proposed rules would create a framework for providing device manufacturers, software developers and others the information they need to introduce innovative new technologies, including apps. I believe that this framework would significantly enhance opportunities for independent and minority voices. Specifically, competition in interfaces, search functions, and integration of programming sources can lead customers to have greater ability to locate and access minority and special interest programming. This is about bringing increased access and choice to the top of the pile, not the bottom.

There is an abundance of rich content and new technology. As you point out, technology is paving the way for software and apps to provide video programming to consumers. Consumers deserve a variety of choices to view the programming they want, when they want and on the device or app they want. More choices often drive down consumer costs and drive up innovation.

I believe the Commission's proposal will lead to innovation that will improve consumer choice and options for innovative independent and minority-owned content providers. As we develop a record and explore fulfilling the statutory mandate, I look forward to continuing to work with you on this important consumer issue.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
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THE CHAIRMAN

March 18, 2016

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1401 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Lofgren:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's recent Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) seeking comment on how to better foster competition in the set-top box marketplace and Section 629 of the Communications Act. Your views are very important and will be considered as part of the Commission's review.

I share your commitment to ensure consumers have choice in the set-top box marketplace. As you point out, Section 629 of the Communications Act is explicit: "The Commission shall... adopt regulations to assure the commercial availability, to consumers of multichannel video programming... of converter boxes, interactive communications equipment, and other equipment... from manufacturers, retailers, and other vendors not affiliated with any multichannel video program distributor [emphasis added]." The issue before the Commission is how to obey Section 629 in a world of evolving technology. The lack of choice that consumers have today for set top boxes would appear to be the opposite of the choice inherent in an "app TV" future and contrary to the statutory mandate.

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Page 2—The Honorable Zoe Lofgren

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Sincerely,



Tom Wheeler



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March 18, 2016

The Honorable Chellie Pingree  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2162 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Pingree:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's recent Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) seeking comment on how to better foster competition in the set-top box marketplace and Section 629 of the Communications Act. Your views are very important and will be considered as part of the Commission's review.

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Tom Wheeler





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OFFICE OF  
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March 18, 2016

The Honorable Robert C. Scott  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1201 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Scott:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's recent Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) seeking comment on how to better foster competition in the set-top box marketplace and Section 629 of the Communications Act. Your views are very important and will be considered as part of the Commission's review.

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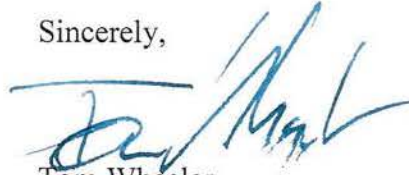
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Sincerely,



Tom Wheeler





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March 18, 2016

The Honorable Louise M. Slaughter  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2469 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Slaughter:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's recent Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) seeking comment on how to better foster competition in the set-top box marketplace and Section 629 of the Communications Act. Your views are very important and will be considered as part of the Commission's review.

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March 18, 2016

The Honorable Mark Takano  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1507 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Takano:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's recent Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) seeking comment on how to better foster competition in the set-top box marketplace and Section 629 of the Communications Act. Your views are very important and will be considered as part of the Commission's review.

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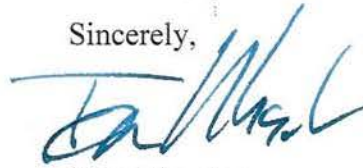
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March 18, 2016

The Honorable Mike Thompson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
231 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Thompson:

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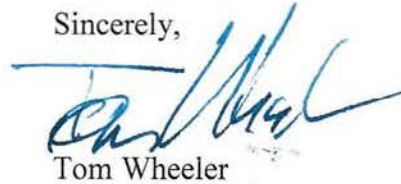
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